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Documents on Prisoners of War

Howard S. Levie (Editor)

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DOCUMENT NO. 6

**TREATY OF KUTSCHUK-KAINARDJI [KUCUK KAINARDJI], BEING
A TREATY OF PEACE BETWEEN CATHERINE II, TSARINA OF
RUSSIA, AND ABDUL-HAMID I, SULTAN OF THE OTTOMAN
EMPIRE (21 July 1774)**

SOURCES

2 Israel 913

45 Parry 349

NOTE

This treaty ended a war (one of many) between Russia and Turkey which had begun in 1768. The provision concerning prisoners of war who had changed their religion is typical of a number of such treaties entered into by the Ottoman Empire with Christian countries, especially Russia, over a period of years during the latter part of the eighteenth century and the early part of the nineteenth. (See, for example, DOCUMENT NO. 18.) The original treaty was signed in French and Italian versions only.

EXTRACT

Article XXV

All prisoners of war and slaves of both sexes, of whatever dignity and rank, who are now in the two Empires, except for those who, being Moslems, have voluntarily embraced the Christian Religion in the Russian Empire, and those, being Christians, who have voluntarily embraced the Moslem Religion in the Ottoman Empire, immediately after the ratification of this Treaty shall be liberated with no ransom or payment, with no pretexts advanced. Likewise, all other Christians who have fallen into slavery, Poles, Moldavians, Wallachians, Peloponesians, inhabitants of the islands, and Georgians, in whatever number they may be, shall be liberated without the least exception, with no ransom or payment.